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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 19 November 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

later: Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania)
(Vice-President)

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [19]
- (a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
- (b) Reports of the Secretary-General
- (c) Draft resolution
- Programme of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 19 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/46/23; A/AC.109/1056-A/AC.109/1063, A/AC.109/1064 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1065-A/AC.109/1067, A/AC.109/1068 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1069-A/AC.109/1071, A/AC.109/1073, A/AC.109/1074 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1075-A/AC.109/1078, A/AC.109/1079 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1082)

(b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/589, A/46/593, A/46/634)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.22)

Mr. SAEED (Pakistan): The twentieth century has been one of great and historic changes in the human condition. We have seen the sum of human knowledge expanding at a rate without precedent. Technologically the world has been remade before our eyes. Trade and commerce that were exotic or unimaginable a generation ago are now commonplace. The further reaches of space and the deepest depths of the sea have been explored.

Yet when future historians look back to our times all these marvellous changes are likely to be seen as incidental to a political process which has set the twentieth century apart from all others before it: the emergence of millions of people from colonial domination to independence through a process of decolonization. It is the process by which a major part of humanity has regained its spiritual, intellectual and physical potential. In this effort the United Nations has played a central role. If there is one activity above all others that has affected the universality of the United Nations, making it truly representative of the international community of States, it is the process of decolonization.

(Mr. Saeed, Pakistan)

The United Nations role in decolonization is written into its Charter. It reaffirms our faith in fundamental human values and human dignity, equal rights for all nations, large and small, progressive development towards self-government and independence for those who are still deprived of it and the preservation of independence and sovereignty of those who possess it.

The United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted on 14 December 1960, stressed that all peoples have the right to self-determination; that the subjection of peoples to foreign domination and exploitation is a denial of fundamental human rights and is contrary to the United Nations Charter; that inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence; that repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples should cease; and that steps should be taken in colonial Territories to transfer all powers to the peoples of those Territories. The Declaration is the basis for the General Assembly's continuing interest in ending systems of colonial oppression and exploitation.

It is my delegation's hope that with the adoption of resolution 43/47, by which the last decade of the century was declared the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the world will have ensured the total demise of colonialism before the turn of the century.

(Mr. Saeed, Pakistan)

The thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, commemorated last year with the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/33, provided an opportunity for Member States to rededicate themselves to the principles and objectives enunciated in the document and to make the concerted efforts which need to be made to remove the last vestiges of colonialism in all regions of the world.

Freedom and self-determination are the birthright of all peoples, regardless of the size or the location of their respective countries, regardless of wealth, the limitation of natural resources or the size of population, and regardless of race, ethnic identity, religion or national language. It is a Charter obligation of the administering Powers to create conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories which will enable them to determine their future political and economic status. It is for the administering Powers to ensure that all economic and military activities in the Territories are to the benefit of their populations by improving their standard of living and enhancing economic self-sufficiency, essential for the transition of those Territories to self-government.

As Members of the United Nations, we find it incumbent upon us to keep a close watch over the conditions obtaining in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In this regard my delegation would like to register its appreciation and commendation of the invaluable work being done by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration. The Special Committee, through its extensive reports, has kept us abreast of political, social, economic and other conditions obtaining in the Territories. This information has, as in the past, been ably supplemented by the petitioners who had the opportunity of addressing the Fourth Committee

(Mr. Saeed, Pakistan)

with respect to different Territories. The first-hand information obtained as a consequence of the United Nations visiting missions has also proved very effective in ascertaining the wishes of the people to facilitate the process of decolonization.

My delegation has followed closely the three interim reports submitted by the Secretary-General in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, and supports the proposals contained in the annex to the Secretary-General's report (A/46/634) on the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which, if adopted, could serve as a plan of action for the International Decade.

More often than not the economic infrastructure and human resource development in Non-Self-Governing Territories are weak. Their fragile economies are sustained by a single or a limited activity which is linked to the interests of the Administering Authority. The brittle economy and lack of adequate trained manpower in the Non-Self-Governing Territories often proves to be an impediment in their movement towards independence or in the immediate post-independence period. It is therefore imperative that their economic base be broadened and that specialized cadres be trained to take over the reins of the country. The United Nations, through its specialized agencies, can and should play a major role in this regard.

My country, Pakistan, being fully committed to the process of decolonization and having experienced similar teething problems, is making a modest contribution to the training of specialized cadres by offering scholarships in various disciplines to students from Non-Self-Governing Territories for undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate studies in medicine, commerce, public administration and political science.

(Mr. Saeed, Pakistan)

In South Africa the pernicious and abhorred system of apartheid has persisted despite universal condemnation. It has not only denied the suppressed majority the right to self-determination, but has also denied them their basic human dignity. Recent developments in South Africa constitute steps in the right direction and are a source of cautious optimism for us all. But unfortunately they still fall short of the complete dismantling of the system of apartheid. It is clear that apartheid cannot be reformed. It has to be eliminated in full and in all its manifestations.

We must not relent in our pressure on South Africa, and should maintain political, economic and military sanctions until there is clear evidence of profound and irreversible changes in South Africa, as envisaged in the Declaration on Apartheid and Its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted at the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly. We are anxiously waiting for the total eradication of apartheid and the creation of a free, democratic and non-racial society in South Africa based on justice, equality and self-determination.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate Pakistan's unswerving commitment to the cause of decolonization, which would remain woefully incomplete if the inalienable right to self-determination and independence continued to be denied in even one place on our globe. Colonialism is an anachronism which is morally distasteful, and its remaining vestiges impel us to join hands for a final push to banish it completely and for ever, from the globe. I am confident that we can live up to our ideals and accomplish the goal of decolonization by the end of the century.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): The rapid changes affecting all mankind at the threshold of the twenty-first century

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

create new possibilities for the world's peoples to attain their right to choose freely the course of their development, to wipe the last vestiges of colonialism off the political map of the world and to attain all the objectives of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

In marking last year the thirtieth anniversary of that historic document, the international community was fully justified in declaring, in resolution 45/33 of 20 November 1990:

> "the Declaration has played an important role in assisting the peoples under colonial rule and will continue to serve as an inspiration in their efforts to achieve self-determination and independence in accordance with the Charter and in mobilizing world public opinion for the complete elimination of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations".
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> (resolution 45/33, twelfth preambular paragraph)

During the years that have passed, the United Nations family has been joined by 66 States, the overwhelming majority of which had freed themselves from the shackles of colonial domination.

Today we have to deal with the question how to bring the tasks defined by the Declaration to their logical conclusion, and what the United Nations should do to ensure that the beginning of the new millennium will mark mankind's liberation from the scourges of colonialism and racism.

In our view, one of the main approaches should be to improve the work of the United Nations, enhancing the effectiveness of our consideration of the problems involved in bringing about complete decolonization as early as possible and our process for adopting decisions and recommendations and ensuring their full implementation.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

It is obvious that the context in which the question of decolonization is considered should not be limited to the United Nations. It would be useful to bring the Organization itself closer, in the spatial sense, to the Non-Self-Governing Territories - for instance, to consider the possibility of holding seminars, round tables and other such forums in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. Actions of that kind at the same time make it possible, in our view, for representatives of those Territories to participate more actively in the work of the United Nations on those matters. Such an approach would make possible the practical implementation of our desire to bring the administering Powers into closer cooperation with the United Nations.

It would also be useful, as has been proposed, to arrange visits by representatives of the Secretary-General to Non-Self-Governing Territories and to dispatch visiting missions for on-site assessment of the situation. Such proposals are contained in document A/46/23, part II. It must be stated plainly that this is not a simple matter, especially if we take into account the fact that up to now not all administering Powers have evinced a willingness to accept such arrangements. We consider this a very important question, primarily because its positive solution would make it possible to obtain information about situations at first hand.

A question that quite legitimately arises, of course, is that of a clear definition of the tasks of those missions in each concrete case. Such a definition is unquestionably within the capability of the Special Committee, and we hope to see a speedy and positive contribution from it on working out proposals relating to this matter. Great importance attaches to the existence

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

of good will and a spirit of cooperation on the part of the administering Powers, and to their readiness to submit, in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter, all necessary information on the Territories under their administration. The completeness, depth and adequacy of that information would largely determine the need for sending visiting missions in each specific case and defining their objectives.

Accordingly, the delegation of Ukraine hopes that administering Powers will cooperate fully with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which could be an important, if not decisive, supplement to our common efforts.

One of the important means for reaching the goals and objectives of the Declaration consists in the dissemination of information to acquaint world public opinion with all aspects of the problems of decolonization and in the provision of effective assistance to the peoples of colonial Territories in achieving freedom and determining their future.

We support the efforts of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat in disseminating fundamental materials and documents on decolonization matters, including the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee. At the same time, the Department should give attention to ensuring that the dissemination of information is directed first of all towards the regions where there still are Non-Self-Governing Territories and towards the countries which are administering Powers.

The information itself should, in addition to describing the situation in the Territories, reflect more fully those activities of foreign economic and

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

other circles which are hindering the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Such information should also include data about military activities and measures in colonial Territories which are an obstacle to achieving the goals of the Declaration.

Moreover, the existing forms and means of informing the world's peoples about the present situation in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and about their further prospects should be complemented by new approaches. One of them, in our view, could be the dissemination of information that can prepare those peoples which have not yet achieved self-determination to take their own decision to determine their future.

As is well known, the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are, generally speaking, small island States with unique economic, ecological and social problems. Therefore no single pattern can be used in approaching their decolonization. The main consideration in the approach to such Territories must thus be the views of the colonial countries' own peoples.

Unfortunately, in the polemical rhetoric of the era of confrontation, that fundamental element was often forgotten and lost behind the screen of many different formulas. We therefore believe that to facilitate their decision, the peoples of such Territories must be given the maximum amount of information about the possible ways of making their choice and the possible final form of their State structure.

I should like to speak also on the question of the rationalization of the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as well as the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly; some tentative efforts to achieve that end have been made recently.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukraine)

We think that the way to rationalize the work of those bodies is, first of all, to abandon obsolete methods of work, outmoded formulas involving many resolutions whose provisions often do not meet today's needs. We must firmly reject everything that is part of the confrontational baggage of the cold war and move towards consensus solutions.

A positive step in that direction is the beginning, during this session, of a search in the Fourth Committee for new forms of work on resolutions proposed by the Special Committee and the efforts to make their wording consistent with the realities of today.

Secondly, rationalization should be aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the work of those bodies, which includes the agenda, the procedure for the consideration of questions, and the adoption and implementation of decisions and recommendations. Today, as everyone knows, the agenda of the Fourth Committee contains a rather small number of items, and proposals are therefore being made to the effect that it should consider some questions from other Committees of the General Assembly, in particular from the Special Committee, or that the Special Committee should be incorporated into the Fourth Committee. The Committee could then be called "Committee on Decolonization and Special Political Questions". Thus the General Assembly would stress the priority of decolonization questions in the Committee's activities.

I would like to stress that these questions will, of course, require very careful study in the appropriate Committees of the General Assembly.

The delegation of Ukraine is ready to consider such proposals, fully realizing that they imply the problem of a possible change in or additions to the terms of reference of Committees of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Qudovenko, Ukraine)

Lastly, in advocating the merging of certain agenda items and the decisions to be taken regarding them, my delegation feels that this approach must in no way prejudice the substance of the consideration of those questions.

The processes going on in the world, characterized by intensified common aspirations of mankind towards freedom and democracy, leave no doubt that the goals and objectives of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples will be achieved.

Mrs. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Three decades and the new dynamics of international relations have in no way modified the importance of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, set forth in resolution 1514 (XV). Nor could it be otherwise, for man's desire for freedom is indomitable and unchanging.

The new international scene undeniably provides a climate conducive to acceleration of the decolonization process. More than ever, nations, individuals and public opinion are rejecting and condemning the various forms of domination exercised by certain States over other peoples. More than ever the Committee on decolonization justifies its existence. The last decade of this century must indeed witness the eradication of colonialism. The United Nations, which initiated this process and devoted all of these years to the implementation of the Declaration, has the duty to take this task all the way to its conclusion.

A brief assessment of the progress made towards the implementation of the Declaration this year gives us reason for some optimism.

We have welcomed as States Members of our Organization two former Trust Territories, namely, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, to whom we once again extend our warm congratulations and best wishes for the future.

The Fourth Committee adopted, again by consensus, the draft resolution on the Western Sahara. The international community has been following with interest the implementation of the peace plan, and my delegation takes this opportunity to encourage the parties to that conflict to show good will, and real political will, so that the ambiguities still standing in the way of a free choice for the Sahraoui people can be removed.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

The administering Powers of the Non-Self-Governing Territories are participating more and more in the work of the Special Committee. There is increasing cooperation that augurs well for their willingness to better prepare the inhabitants of the Territories to take charge of their future.

With the exception of Western Sahara and St. Helena, the geographical situation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories puts them in the category of small developing islands and allows us to discern more easily the problems that stand in the way of their development. These obstacles are, first, those caused by nature: climate, the nature of the soil and their remoteness from the rest of the world, and then there are the obstacles created by man, due to colonialism. Among the latter, foreign economic activities in the Territories have long been considered a major obstacle. After all, colonialism subjugated peoples in order to exploit their natural resources by exploiting their human resources. Now that ideological antagonisms no longer exist, a more objective and pragmatic analysis of those activities reveals that economic investments in the Territories can help their economic growth. They create jobs, improve infrastructures, and connect the Territories to the outside world. However, we reaffirm here the primacy of the right of permanent sovereignty over natural wealth and resources as a fundamental element of the right of peoples to decide their own fate; for a people deprived of the possession, use and development of its wealth and natural resources in its own interests would be incapable of safeguarding its economic independence and consequently its political independence.

We must therefore find a way to ensure that these activities do not infringe the rights of the inhabitants and do not undermine their future.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

In this respect, we support the suggestion often made by the delegation of Mexico that the administering Powers be asked to communicate up-to-date and detailed economic and social indicators on each of the Territories still under colonial domination, such as per capita income, percentage of jobs created by foreign activities, level of wages, cost of living, and so forth.

Just after achieving self-determination, the Non-Self-Governing Territories - which are the other side of the coin from regional economic groupings - may be left out of the mainstream if they do not have a solid political and economic infrastructure. I will transmit to the Assembly the conclusion reached at the Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Accra in September, namely that there is no political stability in conditions of economic distress, which breed deceit and violence.

Thus, to avoid what might be termed the side-effects of self-determination, we urge the administering Powers, not only to establish conditions conducive to peaceful evolution towards self-determination, but above all carefully to prepare the inhabitants for economic self-sufficiency and political maturity. My delegation remains convinced that making the most of human resources, through a system of education and training adapted to the particular needs and features of each Territory, is the best way to attain that goal. We must avoid unemployment and emigration to more prosperous regions. The phenomenon of the violent expulsion of migrant workers from the wealthier countries suggests that strategies are needed that are appropriate to each Territory at different levels of political, constitutional, economic and social development.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Another aspect on which my delegation would place emphasis is the need to make the populations of Non-Self-Governing Territories more aware of the various political options available to them and of the assurance that what they feel best meets their needs and interests will be respected. The administering Powers can contribute effectively to this not only by the dissemination of information at the local level but also by encouraging and continuing to facilitate the participation of the inhabitants of the Territories in colloquiums, seminars and other regional activities.

We also encourage the Administering Authorities to activate the decolonization process by welcoming visiting missions. This would enable the Special Committee to have first-hand information and, above all, to have a better picture of the political and social climate of the countries concerned, supplementing the information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories that the administering Powers are required to provide under article 73 e of the Charter.

The United Nations should continue to play a dynamic role in the implementation of the Declaration in resolution 1514 (XV). The International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism provides the setting for more sustained activity. In this context, we support the suggestions of the delegation of Yugoslavia (A/46/593, chap. II), made on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and in particular we emphasize: the recommendation on the drawing up of a comprehensive review of the situation of each of the Territories in order to assess the possibility of organizing referendums on self-determination; the proposal to set in motion concrete mechanisms of international assistance in the Territories, especially in terms of economic growth and development as well as protection of the environment;

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

the proposal to extend an invitation to the specialized agencies of the United Nations and to the financial institutions to draw up appropriate programmes; and the request for international assistance to improve the educational systems in the Territories, the provision of scholarships and training facilities and the protection and enhancement of human rights of their populations.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Finally, we acknowledge the important role that the relevant bodies of the United Nations can play, particularly the Department of Public Information, in the dissemination of information on the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and on the Decade itself.

The Madagascar delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Special Committee towards improving its work. We welcome with satisfaction the decision to merge its two Subcommittees and to set up a Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance. We have also taken note of the spirit of rationalization expressed in the preparation of an omnibus resolution. Moreover, we have followed with particular attention the initiatives taken with the aim of updating the wording and content of resolutions, and regret that they have not led to a consensus. Nevertheless, we should like to see in the various exchanges of views to which they gave rise the conviction of the parties concerned to defend the cause of decolonization to their utmost. These setbacks, we are convinced, are temporary. There is a Malagasy saying - and the work of the Organization has often demonstrated its veracity - that a little disorder is sometimes a prelude to harmony.

In conclusion, I hope that the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism will be crowned with success, so that at the dawn of the twenty-first century peoples finally free of colonialism can work together to build a world of peace and prosperity.

Mr. FLEMMING (Saint Lucia): The 18 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, predominantly located in the Caribbean and the Pacific subregions, have a number of common problems peculiar to small island developing countries, including fragile economies and ecosystems,

(Mr. Flemming, Saint Lucia)

vulnerability to natural disasters and heavy dependence on their administering Powers. Many of the leaders of these Territories have expressed concern for their economic and financial viability before acceding to independence. The economic viability of these Territories depends to a large extent on the economic and technical assistance provided by their respective administering Powers which, under the Charter of the United Nations, have the prime responsibility for the development of self-government in these Territories. New challenges are therefore posed in considering the needs of these groups of Territories, and new strategies must be adopted.

The debate that has been set in motion for reforming the procedures and practices of the United Nations is to be commended. However, it must be emphasized at the outset that any reforms in this regard must recognize as paramount the interests and the needs of the peoples of these Territories. As we at the United Nations are reassessing our approach to the decolonization process, at the same time the subregional as well as other international organizations are taking important initiatives designed to address the problems and concerns of the Non-Self-Governing Territories within their respective spheres of influence. The communiqués of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the South Pacific Forum at their recent summits are evidence of that. The leaders of the Non-Self-Governing Territories themselves are meeting more often to approach many of their problems collectively. These developments, in my delegation's view, are ushering in new attitudes towards the process of decolonization.

In the Caribbean region, several steps have been taken to ensure increased participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories within regional organizations. The Conference of the 12 Heads of Government of the Caribbean

(Mr. Flemming, Saint Lucia)

Community, meeting in Saint Kitts and Nevis in July this year, granted associate membership to the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos and observer status to Anguilla. At their Summit in 1990, the Heads of Government authorized the Secretary-General of CARICOM to enter into consultations with the Government of the United Kingdom, as the administering Power of Anguilla, with a view to strenghening that Territory's position within the CARICOM region. Reference to these consultations is made in the working paper on the British Virgin Islands to the Special Committee. It is also to be noted that Montserrat is already a full member of CARICOM.

The Caribbean Development Bank and the University of the West Indies, both associate institutes of CARICOM, continue to play a very active role in the economic, social, educational and cultural development of the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories. It is my delegation's hope that the important role that regional and subregional organizations play in the decolonization process will be broadened to include a closer working relationship between the Committee of 24, the Fourth Committee and CARICOM and similar organizations in the Pacific.

The Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, through its ministerial sessions, has endeavoured to gain wider access to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The representative of the United States Virgin Islands has, at many sessions of the Fourth Committee, detailed these activities. Since these regional and subregional groups continue to play an important role in the affairs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as well as in international economic and political affairs, it is therefore practical for them to be brought into the work of the United Nations in the implementation of the Declaration.

(Mr. Flemming, Saint Lucia)

Taking these considerations into account, my delegation recommends that the Special Committee establish consultations with the Caribbean Community and the Pacific Forum, as well as with other regional and international organizations within whose spheres of influence these Territories are at present.

(Mr. Flemming, Saint Lucia)

I have emphasized elsewhere the importance of the fullest cooperation and participation of the administering Powers in the decolonization process. For example, the traditional institution of visiting missions needs to be rejuvenated. The report of the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on visiting missions paints a rather bleak picture. However, there is some room for encouragement in the statements by the administering Powers, especially one, which informed the Acting Chairman that the United Nations could be invited as early as next year to send a visiting mission to the Territory under its administration. Other administering Powers have also indicated that they are willing to examine the possibility of receiving visiting missions. They are to be encouraged in these endeavours.

Within the purview of the Decade there is need for the continuing holding of annual seminars in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions following the success of the two regional seminars held during the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration. The need for further seminars has been amply demonstrated by the active participation of the Governments of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the regional Governments and interested non-governmental organizations. These seminars held in the areas of concentration of Non-Self-Governing Territories will provide an opportunity for an exchange of views between the political leaders and local community leaders of the Non-Self-Governing Territories with the members of the Committee of 24. Also, the seminars, properly planned and executed, could be a major channel in the dissemination of information to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Finally, my delegation will continue to cooperate with all institutions concerned in adopting new strategies to advance the interests of the peoples

(Mr. Flemming, Saint Lucia)

of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to facilitating the speedy and final implementation of the Declaration.

Mr. KUKAN (Czechoslovakia): Last year in this forum, we stated:

> "My delegation has followed with great interest the consideration of the decolonization issues in the Fourth Committee this year, and with special interest the discussion of this item in the plenary Assembly. Our interest has been based on curiosity: we have been anxious to find out whether the new spirit in international relations, the independence of Namibia and the progress in efforts to resolve some other questions coupled, rightly or by force of habit, with the subject of decolonization, would be reflected also in the work of the current session of the General Assembly." (A/45/PV.44, p. 3)

In this respect, we noted last year that a breakthrough in the approach of the United Nations to the eradication of colonialism is being deferred to a later time, and we expressed our hope that the year 1991 would be that later time.

We already know that we have been immensely optimistic, both last year and this year as well. It is, however, true that the Committee on decolonization has had some success. A Working Group was established and two Subcommittees were merged into a single one. The so-called omnibus resolution on 10 small Territories was adopted. Minor improvements have been made in some drafts of resolutions prepared by the Committee on decolonization and, finally, the readings of these original Committee of 24 draft resolutions, adopted last week, show that they go a bit further.

However, we should like to offer a different view. The birth of the Working Group was not an easy one. Moreover, for a certain period of time there were two of them, one based on the Committee of 24 and the other based

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

on the Fourth Committee. That was not a good example of straightforward thinking and willingness to reach agreement on the part of those of us who deal with decolonization issues in the United Nations. From the evidence, the Group of the Committee of 24, which has made some concrete progress, was more successful, and we would like to express our appreciation to its Chairman.

However, we cannot deny that its results are also contradictory. The merger of the two Subcommittees can be considered to have been a useful step, but one with only procedural importance, for it does not affect the agenda, which was also mechanically merged and thus contains issues that only pretend a care and interest in the destiny of the last nations still under foreign domination and, in fact, make no contribution to the goals of decolonization. Neither does it touch upon the contents of the issues under discussion.

The green light given by the Working Group to the work on the omnibus resolution and to its final adoption, although there were some problems, was a success. However, there is a question as to whether its present form fully corresponds with the ideas of the original initiator, the delegation of Norway. True, the 10 draft resolutions have been consolidated into one, and so - at least in part - have their contents. Some provisions on small Territories have been set forth in greater detail. However, it is still true that many superfluous things are repeated in the omnibus text and that statements as they stand could have gone much further towards concrete recommendations and conclusions.

What about the other results of the deliberations of the Working Group? How are we to evaluate the fact that it has confirmed the need for the Committee of 24 to continue to deal with the problems of apartheid, thereby not taking into consideration either the developments in South Africa or its

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

own agenda, which is so often referred to with regard to other matters? Indeed, the latter makes no mention of apartheid, and neither should there be any mention of it in materials submitted by the Committee of 24, for what has decolonization to do with the outgoing apartheid regime, no matter how unacceptable, condemnable and inhuman it was in its time? We firmly believe that we can with a clean conscience regard apartheid as an issue of human rights alone, and that it should be dealt with in the Third Committee jointly with political discussion in meetings of the General Assembly as a whole - and, again, not without a reflection of the progress and changes that have taken and are taking place in that country.

With regard to other draft resolutions of the Committee of 24, only an expert could discern the mild shifts that have taken place. In our opinion, those texts have in some aspects gone forward; but they have changed much less than has the world. Comparison of the world situation in 1990 and last year's texts with the world situation in 1991 and the texts submitted this year shows that the draft resolutions adopted this year are worse. They reflect the present day and changing conditions to a lesser extent than they did last year. They even give less consideration to the developments in a given part of the world than they did last year. This year, in a more transparent way than last year, they deal with questions that are not related to the agenda of the Committee on decolonization.

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

Recently, the Committee has begun to move forward from its last year's crossroads. We admit it. It has also set forth, perhaps - let us hope that our wish is not the only source of such an evaluation - in the right direction. But it has set out in this direction very slowly. And at times it turns back, and now and then it becomes lost. It is as if someone has slightly mixed the roadsigns for a driver who is lost, as if some of his own passengers - the members of the Committee of 24 - were using the handbrake. I wonder why. Are they not in a hurry?

We can do nothing but believe that next year these passengers, for whom the course of history is not a pleasant one, will acknowledge that there is no other alternative and will not act as a brake on the Committee but, on the other hand, will help the driver to find the best and most efficient way. Or they will get off. Up to now, unfortunately, we feel that those who are getting off are the ones who were going in the right direction. What about the other passengers? There are only few left of those willing to move forward. Will they be fewer in number? We are sure that they are seriously considering this question. And so are we. At the same time, we are giving thought to what should be done with the Committee. There is much to be done, but nothing less than at this time last year.

For instance, it appears even more urgent now to start strengthening without delay the sense of purpose of this body. Czechoslovakia is essentially in favour of greater concentration and a reduction in the number of sessions of the Committee of 24, of a smaller package of recommendations to be submitted for adoption by the General Assembly, and of such decisions and resolutions which would be more streamlined through the deletion of out-of-date and extraneous provisions. In our view, it would be useful to cut

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the funds allocated for the activities of the Committee of 24, to reduce the total number of sessions of the Committee, to limit the number of documents and to restrict participation of petitioners to the representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

At the same time, we believe that the time is not far off when even the General Assembly will have to modify the Fourth Committee's mission. Proposals have been made to merge the Fourth Committee and the Special Political Committee. We are of the opinion that this proposal is no longer premature. It would be short-sighted to reject it flatly.

These and many other proposals must be considered in a responsible manner. We would like the consideration of these proposals to begin as soon as possible. The Committee of 24, to which a new impulse will hopefully be given by the new Chairman, should be headed by, in our opinion, a competent person from the region affected by the eradication of the last remnants of colonialism and from the country willing to approach this task in a non-traditional, non-fossilized way. We should continue to consider all progressive opinions in the Fourth Committee as well. We therefore fully support the proposal of the current Chairman to establish a formal open-ended working group of the Committee. We cannot help wondering why this proposal did not meet with unequivocal support, as it deserved, at the Committee of 24's final session held last week.

Along with the formal proposal for changes in the decolonization organs of the United Nations, we should also consider the reservations made by a number of States regarding the results of its work. Before doing so, we would like to note with satisfaction that we have abandoned the persistent and dubious practice of upholding the right of the Committee of 24 to draft all,

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or almost all, General Assembly decolonization resolutions. We are glad that, prior to the adoption of the recommendations submitted by the Committee of 24, the Fourth Committee considered and modified them - I do not wish to say sufficiently - and adopted them. It departed from the previous stereotyped and untenable practice of only taking note of them.

On reading the texts of the Committee of 24, a casual observer might easily have the impression that its whole work in 1991 was concentrated on the defence of the same old-style draft resolutions against those who dare to ask for the deletion of outdated provisions. The texts follow outdated formulas and are couched in a stereotyped manner. The conclusions reached this year are practically similar to those of the previous year. The resolutions to be adopted by the General Assembly and always adopted by the Fourth Committee - just slightly improved - are outdated. They contain excessively harsh criticism, are of a confrontational nature, and do not reflect developments in the world or in the regions concerned, above all, in southern Africa. They contain long-abandoned language, useless and selective name-calling of some States and often reflect the tendency of some States to use the Committee of 24 as a platform for the presentation of their political objectives which have little to do with the process of decolonization.*

For some years my delegation has continued to criticize the work of the United Nations bodies dealing with decolonization. But it has also constantly repeated our position on decolonization as a phenomenon. Let me declare once again that Czechoslovakia invariably views the sphere of decolonization as one of the vital concerns of the present United Nations. We do not want to remove

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* Mr. Nyakyi (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

the item from the agenda before colonialism in all its manifestations is completely eliminated. Quite the opposite is true. We want to contribute to this goal.

Czechoslovakia's active participation since the founding of the United Nations has been aimed at contributing to the implementation and strengthening of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the decisions and resolutions of the Organization. Similarly, as a free and democratic country now, we consider it of overriding importance to denounce colonialism and racism as practices that violate the rules of international behaviour and prevent peoples subjected to those practices from exercising the right to self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the historic United Nations General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), bearing in mind resolution 1541 (XV).

Mr. RENAGI LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): The long and close relationship, and especially the cooperation between the Member States of the United Nations in the field of decolonization has resulted in notable achievements. The latest successes were the independence of Namibia in 1990 and the recent admission of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations in 1991 as full Members. Another important milestone was the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

With Namibia's independence and the initiation of the United Nations plan in Western Sahara, we hope that soon the people of Western Sahara will exercise their right to self-determination and independence, thereby closing the last chapter of that long-standing dispute.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

The profound changes on the world scene, particularly in relations between the two major Powers and their followers, are sure to have a far-reaching effect on issues of concern and importance to the Members of the United Nations, both individually and collectively.

Indeed, our most recent past will be remembered as a watershed in the history of the world and of international relations. How we will face these challenges and redefine and reassess our goals and priorities must be a real concern to all Member States now.

Similarly, this recent past has been a watershed in the work of the Special Committee on decolonization and the Fourth Committee, which had to reassess and review their efforts more effectively to meet the unique and specific conditions and problems faced by the peoples of the 18 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, most of which are small islands spread across the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

Papua New Guinea will continue to contribute to these efforts and would support the suggested merger of the Special Political Committee with the Fourth Committee as the Fourth and Special Political Committee in the hope of streamlining and further improving the effectiveness of the United Nations system.

On the basis of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), may we repeat once again that such factors as territorial size, geographical location, size of population and limited natural resources should in no way prevent the peoples of small Territories from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. While we continue to adhere firmly to

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

those principles, we do realize that creating in the small island Territories the optimum socio-economic and political conditions for a free exercise of the right to self-determination and independence would require special efforts on our part and on the part of the international community as a whole, and especially on the part of the administering Powers.

Papua New Guinea strongly believes that these efforts must be based on first-hand information and be in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the colonized peoples and their territories. The recommendations to the General Assembly by the Fourth Committee and the reports of the Special Committee on decolonization this year should reflect the main concern of the international community, namely the specific conditions and problems confronting the peoples of the colonial Territories.

The problems faced by the small Territories are unique and peculiar to this group of countries, and are in many cases additional to those of island developing and sea-locked countries. Besides the major problems of small-size populations, limited natural resources, single-crop economies and vulnerability to natural disasters, to name but a few, they are also faced with the effects of unplanned exploitation of natural resources, drift-net fishing, damage to the environment and the ecology and the use of these small islands for illicit activities such as drug trafficking and money laundering. The international community is obligated to protect them from such detrimental activities. The administering Powers have primary responsibility in this regard. Their continued co-operation with the United Nations is not only essential but also constitutes an obligation that derives from their responsibilities as administering Powers under the Charter of the United Nations.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

My delegation therefore continues to attach the utmost importance to the dispatch of United Nations visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, including New Caledonia. The cooperation and participation of the administering Powers is therefore deemed essential. The efforts of the Special Committee on decolonization and the good offices of the Secretary-General must be increased with a view to continuing and expanding the dialogue with the administering Powers in this regard.

As a country dedicated to the realization of a fundamental human right - the right to self-determination - Papua New Guinea shares with other States Members of the United Nations a greater measure of satisfaction and welcomes the positive steps taken during the past year by the South African authorities towards dismantling apartheid. However, our delegation concurs with the view that it is still not time to set aside our vigilance and that international sanctions must be maintained until all the requirements stipulated in the Declaration on Apartheid and Its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa of 17 September 1990 have been adhered to by the South African authorities.

Decolonization remains a priority on the world scene, and the United Nations must continue to play the leading role in assisting the people concerned in achieving that goal. The momentum attained from Namibia's independence will, I hope, see yet another successful outcome in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action for Western Sahara soon.

We have indeed entered the last decade and have set the ultimate time-frame for our final efforts in favour of completely eradicating colonialism, racism and apartheid from the face of the Earth.

We therefore appeal to the General Assembly that the Special Committee on decolonization and the Fourth Committee are appropriately tasked and funded to

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

spearhead international effort to fulfil the goal set out in General Assembly resolution 43/47 to ensure complete decolonization by the year 2000.

The principles and goals of the United Nations have been upheld and pursued relentlessly by the Member States through the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee; of these, those relating to self-determination and independence have been particularly dear to us. We must not forget that most of the peoples and countries of the international community in this Assembly were once colonized. We know only too well the struggles for freedom and equality in each continent.

It is in the light of this active history of co-operation through the United Nations that we once again appeal to the Member States, and especially the administering Powers, to maintain the momentum in support of writing the last chapter on decolonization.

Finally, our delegation fully supports the statement just made by the Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia, who is also Chairman of the Fourth Committee. We also fully endorse the recommendations he has submitted to the Assembly. I hope the member countries will also endorse them, as we do.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): As important and symbolic as it is, the walk from a seat in the General Assembly Hall to ascend the steps leading to this podium is nevertheless very brief and very easy. However, the journey to reach this Hall - particularly for the people of small countries governed by others with greater military or economic power - is very long, and it is far from easy. For this reason, we believe that the decolonization process should continue to be an important focus of the international community.

Most of the Territories remaining on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories are small islands situated in the Pacific or the Caribbean. Some may not wish to become politically independent. That is their right. We support the right of the people of any Territory to choose and determine their own fate in accordance with their own aspirations. Other Territories, however, do wish to become politically independent, claim their sovereignty and regain their own national identities. Similarly, we support their right to claim their own futures and write their own histories.

Whatever the size of a Territory or of its population, whatever its geographic location, natural resources or level of economic development, its people are entitled to the same right of self-determination and independence exercised by the people of countries formerly listed as Non-Self-Governing Territories. Nonetheless, these factors often combine to make the journey of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories longer and more difficult.

The views of the Government and the people of Vanuatu on the various decolonization issues currently before the United Nations are a matter of public record and need not be repeated in great detail here today. Briefly, we should like to renew our commitment to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and to continue working with all members of the international community in order to help shape a world free of any form of colonialism.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

New Caledonia, East Timor, Western Sahara and other Non-Self-Governing Territories all have their own unique histories; each presents its own unique set of circumstances and its own difficulties. In analysing these circumstances and resolving these difficulties, each can be greatly assisted by a consistent application of the principles and practices of the United Nations.

The International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism was established in accordance with these principles and practices. This Decade, an important initiative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, can help shorten and ease the journey of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. We were pleased to join in the adoption of resolution 43/47, which established this Decade, and we will be equally pleased to join in adopting a plan of action aimed at ushering in a new century free of colonialism.

In this regard we commend the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/46/634. We note the annex to that report and are generally supportive of its summary of the views and suggestions submitted to the Secretary-General in connection with the plan of action requested in General Assembly resolution 43/47. However, we note a major omission from that summary, and as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/46/L.22 we respectfully request that the annex of the report be corrected to include this important omission. What was omitted may be found in the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/46/593.

The Report of the Working Group of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on Decolonization to the Tenth Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Ghana from 2 to 7 September 1991, is reproduced in that document. The report was unanimously adopted by the Tenth Conference

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and transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia as representative of the current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries. Paragraph 3 (h) of the report reads as follows:

"(h) Member States should be invited to consider adopting at the national level such measures, including legislation, that would:

"(i) Discourage all actions and activities, commercial or otherwise, which could be prejudicial to the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence by the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories;

"(ii) Promote full respect for the human rights of peoples living under foreign domination and facilitate their recourse to judicial proceedings in order to gain economic and social restitution." (A/46/593, p. 8)

The language of the annex to the report contained in document A/46/634 differs in two very important respects. In section IV, paragraph 16, it states that "Member States should adopt measures at the national level, including legislation ...". This wording differs significantly from the proposal by the Foreign Ministers of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. That proposal merely invited countries to consider adopting such measures. Furthermore, the annex of the report contained in document A/46/634 completely omitted the second part of that recommendation relating to the promotion of full respect for human rights and facilitating recourse to judicial proceedings.

We believe this to be a significant omission. Both parts of the paragraph recommended by the Working Group of the Non-Aligned Movement were adopted by the Foreign Ministers. We therefore believe that the second part

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of the paragraph should not have been omitted; the entire paragraph should appear in the summary of views and suggestions submitted to the Secretary-General.

This Decade, it is generally agreed, calls upon the international community to take a comprehensive, cooperative and candid approach to the remaining decolonization questions. We should be open to new and fresh ideas that will encourage constructive dialogue and respect for the rule of law rather than clichéd rhetoric and quick recourse to the force of arms. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has always believed that the decolonization process is also a process of building respect for human rights. We also believe it to be a constructive exercise to invite countries to consider adopting measures that might facilitate recourse to judicial proceedings. The world has certainly seen more than enough recourse to violent proceedings. Why not encourage peaceful, judicial proceedings instead?

It is important to note that this suggestion submitted to the Secretary-General by the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers already enjoys the overwhelming support of the membership of the United Nations. A similar, proposal has also been made by the Heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum at their last two meetings. In this regard, it is instructive to examine documents A/45/456 and A/46/344. It would also be helpful to recall document A/AC.109/1040, which contains the Summary of Discussions of the Asia/Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization held in Vanuatu in May of 1990.

Once again, we emphasize the fact that the suggestion contained in paragraph 3 (h) of the report of the Non-Aligned Working Group, adopted by the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers and submitted to the Secretary-General, does not prejudge the issue. It is left to each individual country to decide whether

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it wishes to consider or is even able under its own laws to consider adopting the measures proposed in that paragraph.

Vanuatu, one of the smallest Members of the United Nations, continues to be deeply committed to the decolonization process. Vanuatu itself joined the community of nations as a result of that process. We are thus prepared to join hands with all who seek to enter the next millenium free of colonialism and its vestiges. We know this task will not be easy, but it is necessary if we are to bequeath to the next generation a world that has advanced one step further in the human evolutionary process than the world this generation inherited.

Mr. SAHU (India): Forty-six years ago the founding fathers of the United Nations bestowed upon the Members of our Organization a sacred trust - to rid the world of the scourge of colonialism. A central chapter of the United Nations Charter stood trustee to the interests of the non-self governing peoples of the world.

Soon thereafter, in the year 1960, these concepts and ideals were further elaborated in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This event of monumental importance, which was sponsored by 43 countries from the developing world - India, I am proud to say, among them - came to represent in itself the basic terms of reference for all United Nations activity in this field.

The wave of decolonization that followed has been primarily responsible for revolutionary changes in the world order, which, in magnitude of scale and profundity of influence, have rarely been witnessed in history. As this century approaches its closing years, we can legitimately claim to have largely fulfilled our trust. Our debate today is in many ways an act of homage to the ceaseless struggle, the spirit of determination, the immense sacrifice and the abiding faith that have characterized these turbulent yet exhilarating years. The first half of this century witnessed India's own struggle for national independence, a movement which inspired the minds and passions of our people with the realizable promise of freedom and growth. Since independence in 1947 India has worked unceasingly in the United Nations and elsewhere, for the human dignity and basic rights of those who yearn for the independence to decide their own destiny. These are values of essential

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humanness and coexistence in all of us, born out of the understanding that a common vulnerability can be overcome only by a common realization that such vulnerability is inconsistent with national independence and sovereignty.

Today, 31 years after the adoption of the Declaration, much of the turbulence has ebbed. Much of the world is now free. And in the last couple of years the dramatic end of the cold war, the end of East-West tensions, and the wave of democratization, human rights and political freedom that is sweeping the world in its wake have provided an unparallelled opportunity for us to complete our task. For, as the report of the Special Committee on Decolonization before us makes evident, an admittedly small number of problems remain on our agenda. The very fact that they remain is evidence of the delicacy and complexity of the tasks involved.

The Assembly has declared the last 10 years of this century the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. This is apt, for it highlights simultaneously both the nearness of the goal and the increased vigour and energy that will be needed to achieve it. We therefore welcome the plan of action for its implementation that our Secretary-General has placed before us, and we call on all, administering Powers and others alike, to approach it in the same new-found spirit of cooperation and understanding, political realism and flexibility that this task calls for from us. It demands, overarchingly, that, in accordance with the Declaration, the desires of the people of these remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories themselves must remain paramount. This is one of the key guarantees for the success of our efforts. It must be given freely and transparently. It has to remain the core of our endeavour.

(Mr. Sahu, India)

The plan for a referendum on self-determination in the Western Sahara, which is at present under implementation under the auspices of the Security Council, is yet another step towards the fulfilment of our trust. My delegation would like to express its support for the Secretary-General's efforts, and calls upon the parties to the conflict to extend their fullest cooperation to him in the successful fulfilment of his delicate and monumental responsibility.

In other parts of the world, in New Caledonia and in the Malvinas, we are again encouraged by the fact that a dialogue is in progress between the parties concerned. Some mutually acceptable agreements have already been reached in both cases, and we encourage the continuation of these contacts and the implementation of these understandings in that spirit of harmony and peaceful cooperation which alone can ensure their successful solution.

Most of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are small island Territories in the Pacific and Caribbean. We have detailed and clear portrayals of the situations within these Territories from the commendable work done by the Special Committee on decolonization. The complexities of each situation are clearly diverse, but it is vividly evident that the inherent right of each of these Territories to decide its political future for itself is widely cherished. The administering Powers must bear the heavy obligation of protecting the vulnerable economies and ecologies of these islands, while providing the people with the opportunity to determine freely, from a well-informed standpoint, what they perceive to be in their best interest. The Special Committee on decolonization, on its part, must carry

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the responsibility of reflecting the true interests of these Territories, for, indeed, the latter have no one else to turn to. We call on the administering Powers and the Special Committee to work jointly towards this end.

The world has come a long way since 1946. As we approach the end of this century, we should be seriously concerned that vestiges of colonialism remain with us. We are dealing with the future of peoples, with the future of nations, with fundamental constructs of political freedom, equality and the right to decide one's own destiny. These are not issues to be taken lightly. It is imperative that we work together in earnestness to fulfil the trust which the Charter imposed on us: to complete successfully the task that we have set ourselves - to eradicate colonialism in its remaining vestiges from the Earth within the present decade.

There are today many vitally important issues of global concern which increasingly demand the urgent attention of all of us. Once we have fulfilled our sacred trust, we shall all be in a position further to strengthen our cooperation, directed, in full confidence, to the fulfilment of the other tasks that lie ahead.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): My delegation would like to recall with satisfaction the fact that over the years the Assembly has devoted considerable attention and effort to the important issue of decolonization. We are delighted to acknowledge that the Assembly's efforts have resulted in the remarkable progress that has been made over the years in the eradication of colonialism. We should like to commend the Assembly, and in particular the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, for the work that has been done to assist the remaining Territories to attain independence.

The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples - resolution 1514 (XV) - is one of the most important documents ever to have been adopted by the United Nations. The independence of Namibia and the current positive developments in South Africa represent a milestone in the unremitting efforts of the international community to secure the implementation of that Declaration, which has been a source of inspiration to colonial countries and peoples in their struggle for freedom and independence. The new opportunities and the greatly improved prospects for peace and security that have been created as a result of the ending of the cold war should facilitate the demise of colonialism and expedite the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV) in its totality.

There is no doubt that in the present international circumstances colonialism has become more anachronistic than ever. We fail to see how it can be sustained, under any pretext, in this decade, in which the issues of democratization, human rights and political pluralism have assumed important dimensions on the international agenda. We must therefore remain consistent in upholding the principle that all peoples, without exception, should be

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given the freedom to decide their own fate. The international community should not relent in its endeavours to ensure that peoples in Non-Self-Governing Territories and colonies are duly accorded the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

The argument - we have heard such arguments - that some of the remaining Territories are too small to be viable as independent States seems to us to be self-serving. It is reminiscent of a similar debate of the 1970s, when ideas such as the concept of associate membership of the United Nations were being put forward for the purpose of stemming the membership tide arising from decolonization. We are now living witnesses to the constructive role that many so-called small countries have played in the work of the United Nations. It is our considered opinion that, no matter how small these remaining Territories and colonies are, it is only equitable and just that the indigenous peoples should be given the opportunity to decide whether or not they ought to be independent. We see no alternative to early progress towards the end of colonialism. In this connection, my delegation strongly believes that the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and independence should not be qualified, abridged or limited in any way.

It is common knowledge, of course, that no other continent has suffered the ravages of colonialism and racism, or continues to bear the scars of this twin condition, to the same extent as has Africa. We cannot, therefore, but continue to re-emphasize the need for the international community to take concerted action to eradicate the remaining problems that are linked with colonialism and, of course, with the issue of apartheid. The declaration of the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism not only is judicious but also underscores the fervent desire of

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the Assembly to put the issue of colonialism behind it within a reasonable time-frame. It is timely, and it merits the support of us all.

We commend the plan of action for the implementation of the Decade, as proposed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We also urge Member States to support the efforts of the Special Committee, as well as the proposals of the Fourth Committee towards implementation of the plan of action.

We are convinced that there is a clear desire on the part of all members of the international community to see an early end put to every form of colonialism. Political and economic conditions conducive to the process of decolonization must therefore be created in these Territories by the administering Powers.

It is the view of my delegation that the international community has a duty, particularly in the emerging new world order, to assist the peoples in the remaining Territories to attain self-determination and independence. Similarly, it is our shared responsibility to continue to encourage, admonish and, when necessary, push the administering Powers with a view to ensuring continuous progress towards the objectives set out by the Assembly in resolution 1514 (XV). It would be to the everlasting credit of our Organization if the end of this century were to coincide with the end of colonialism and the end of the subjugation of any people anywhere in the world.

Mr. MONTERO (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): As in previous years, it is with a great deal of faith and confidence that my delegation speaks on the item before us. This is a matter that has deep moral and ethical implications, of which Chile cannot fail to take note. We reiterate our deep belief in the just cause of decolonization, and we support all the

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measures favoured by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The acting Chairman of the Committee presented a thorough report to the General Assembly yesterday.

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In reaching an important new anniversary since its creation, the Special Committee on decolonization, of which my country is honoured to be a member, has made an historic contribution to the just cause of independence and self-determination for many colonial countries and peoples. There is no doubt that it can take pride in its achievements. We believe that the Committee's work is as yet unfinished: much remains to be done to ensure that the goals that we set for ourselves in resolution 1514 (XV), which set the frame of reference for decolonization, are fully attained.

All in all, we note that there are still, in many parts of the world, Territories subject to colonial rule and far from achieving their legitimate independence; this runs counter to repeated resolutions of our Organization, especially the aforementioned resolution 1514 (XV), and those others which have insistently advocated the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination. We firmly believe that the work of our Organization in the sphere of decolonization, especially the work carried out by the Special Committee which addresses these matters, will remain unfinished so long as the last colonial vestige persists in some corner of the globe.

Under these circumstances, the Organization's responsibility is enormous. I am certain that in the pursuit of this noble aim the United Nations will continue to enjoy, as it has done up till now, the valuable support of the international community, which is without a doubt more aware than ever of how utterly anachronistic colonial practices are in the world of today. As a free and sovereign country, we attach importance to what that means, and will never accept coercion against the free determination of peoples, nor will we accept, under any circumstances, any restriction on the rights of the inhabitants of any Territory to determine, freely and democratically, the form of government under which they wish to live. These

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fundamental principles, which are both the essence of the human person and synonymous with the most elementary dignity of the human person, are deeply rooted in the feelings of the Chilean people; whence the importance my delegation attaches to them and the force with which we reaffirm them from this rostrum.

In surveying the map of our planet, we can see how colonial hold-outs are growing ever fewer, with a total of less than 20 small Territories with small populations, although they have great hopes of achieving their longed-for self-determination very soon. We are confident that by the end of this decade, declared by the General Assembly to be the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the world will be free of the remnants of an unwanted inheritance from the past, and our Organization will be able to welcome in its midst other nations which have taken their destinies into their own hands.

To achieve this goal, we must persist until the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which we have been pursuing for over 30 years, is complete. To that end, in our view, it would be well worth while adopting and endorsing the well-found opinions and suggestions contained in the aforementioned report of the Special Committee (A/46/23), which the Secretary-General takes up in his report (A/46/634), also before the plenary Assembly.

We concur in the view that the task we face with regard to the total eradication of colonialism is a shared responsibility, which ought to involve both the international community and the United Nations system, and also those governmental and non-governmental organizations associated with the commitment to assist the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in their transition to self-determination.

(Mr. Montero, Chile)

Participation by the administering Powers in these decolonization processes is of fundamental importance, as is their thorough interaction with the United Nations, especially in the quest for a climate of confidence and mutual understanding. At this stage, we believe that it is of fundamental importance for the populations of Non-Self-Governing Territories to be kept informed of the new political alternatives that their rulers are offering them, so that they will be prepared to participate democratically in choosing their own destinies.

The mechanism which is proposed for consultations between our Organization and the administering Powers should shift into higher gear during the present phase in decolonization, so that the referendums impending in some colonial Territories can take place within the time frame established by the International Decade and the expectations we have set for ourselves can be fulfilled.

With respect to the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning areas in which action is requested of the administering Powers as a matter of priority, my delegation believes that all of these initiatives are dependent, in the first place, on the political will and the sincere desire of the administering Powers to offer their complete and effective support to the Special Committee for the better achievement of its lofty mandate. Given that support, I have no doubt that the work of the Special Committee would be facilitated enormously, as it would even be able to propose new procedures or courses of action which would reduce the expected time-frames and bring forward the deadlines for decolonization.

In this context, my delegation makes an urgent appeal to the administering Powers and to all the organizations and other countries involved

(Mr. Montero, Chile)

in the decolonization process to facilitate the work of the Special Committee. The Special Committee cannot evade the historic mission entrusted to it by our Organization: our consciences so demand, as do the consciences of so many peoples which, I hope, will very soon, as we do, share in their most precious and fundamental rights, such as the right to the free exercise of self-determination in democracy and freedom.

We are motivated by a profound optimism that the International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism will come to an end with its goal fulfilled. We hope to see this very soon, and to add that cause for rejoicing to the joy we expressed from this rostrum last year on the occasion of the independence of Namibia, which still warms our hearts.

My country's concern for the progress of the decolonization processes which are now under way has as much importance on our international agenda as our unlimited commitment to democracy and human rights. We firmly believe that there is a close interdependence between decolonization and those commitments: decolonization is of fundamental importance if the others are to be upheld, and together they are the foundations of our societies, which are ruled by principles and values in which there is no replacement for democracy, freedom and self-determination in the happiness of peoples.

My delegation, aware of the need to continue supporting new initiatives to promote the complete eradication of colonialism, has joined with great satisfaction in sponsoring the draft resolution (A/46/L.22) to that end which was submitted by the Republic of Yugoslavia, in the secure knowledge that its adoption by the Assembly will be a powerful stimulus to the work the Organization has been carrying out, in such earnest, on a subject of such international importance.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): I have asked for the floor only to thank the representative of Czechoslovakia for his statement, which was characterized by his now well known intellectual lucidity and elegance of style. We have found his statement enlightening and we trust that other delegations share our feelings.

The PRESIDENT: As was announced yesterday, the Assembly will take action on the draft resolution (A/46/L.22) at a later date, to be announced in the Journal.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: In order to assist delegations in planning their work, I should like to clarify further the programme of work of the Assembly for November.

As previously announced, on Thursday, 21 November, in the morning, the Assembly will commence consideration of agenda item 33, "Question of Palestine". Consideration of this item will continue on Friday, 22 November, in the morning.

On Monday, 25 November, in the morning, the Assembly will take up agenda item 32, "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic".

On Tuesday, 26 November, in the morning, and on Wednesday, 27 November, in the afternoon, the Assembly will consider agenda item 35, "The situation in the Middle East".

(The President)

I should like to take this opportunity to request the sponsors of draft resolutions on those items to submit the texts to the Secretariat as soon as possible. Some of these draft resolutions have programme-budget implications, and these must be considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, as well as by the Fifth Committee, before action can be taken in the plenary Assembly. Ideally, we should be able to take action on the draft resolutions at the conclusion of the debates.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.

UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/46/PV.50
13 December 1991

ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 50th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 20 November 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia)

- The situation in Cambodia [24]

  (a) Report of the Secretary-General

  (b) Draft resolution

- Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments [18] (continued)

  (g) Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit: note by the Secretary-General

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 24

THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/617)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/46/L.21)

The PRESIDENT: The report of the Secretary-General on the item has been issued as document A/46/617. In this connection, a draft resolution has been issued as document A/46/L.21.

I am of the view that draft resolution A/46/L.21 duly reflects the concerns of the parties involved. Accordingly, the draft resolution I am submitting is the result of a consensus between the parties. I trust that the Assembly, too, will adopt it by consensus. This will mark a historic occasion for the people of Cambodia.

Here I should like to express my appreciation to the international community for its support and assistance, especially the humanitarian aid given to the Cambodian people since 1978, and to all interested States and parties in making possible the conclusion of the agreements on a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict, signed at the Paris Conference on Cambodia on 23 October 1991.

The Paris Agreements provide for a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict which, inter alia, would maintain, preserve and guarantee the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, inviolability, neutrality and national unity of Cambodia.

(The President)

In this regard, I should like to express my special appreciation for the continuing efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and his staff towards the implementation of the Paris Agreements on a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict. I should also like to thank the co-Presidents of the Paris Conference on Cambodia, the members of the Security Council, the regional and other States, in particular the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Cambodian parties themselves, especially His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, for their invaluable contribution to restoring and maintaining peace and unity in Cambodia and to promoting national reconciliation.

I appeal to all parties concerned to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to set up an effective United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia as soon as possible, with the aim of restoring peace and stability in Cambodia and of implementing the Paris Agreements. I also call upon all parties concerned to comply fully with the cease-fire that entered into force at the time of the signing of the Paris Agreements, and urge all parties concerned to implement fully the terms of the Paris Agreements in close cooperation with the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia.

The draft resolution currently before the Assembly welcomes the fact that commitments to self-determination for the Cambodian people through free and fair elections organized and conducted by the United Nations, and full respect for human rights, have been incorporated in the provisions of the settlement. It calls upon all parties concerned to ensure respect for and full observance of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Cambodian people, and to assist them in exercising their right to self-determination in free and fair elections, as provided for in the Paris Agreements.

(The President)

Finally, I should also like to express my deep appreciation also to the donor countries, the United Nations agencies and other national and international humanitarian organizations that have rendered assistance to the Cambodian people, and urge them to continue their support for the process of repatriating Cambodian refugees and displaced persons under the leadership and coordination of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia. In this connection, the draft resolution reiterates deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in coordinating humanitarian relief assistance and in monitoring its distribution, and requests him to continue such efforts as necessary.

Before moving on to take action on the draft resolution, I wish to point out that, as part of the understanding between those directly concerned, it was agreed that there would be no debate on the item in the General Assembly. It is therefore suggested that we proceed accordingly, in order to permit the broadest possible support for the draft resolution.

If I hear no objections, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees not to discuss the item under consideration.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.21.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt this draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/46/L.21 was adopted (resolution 46/18).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 24.

AGENDA ITEM 18 (continued)

APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

(g) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/107 and Corr.1)

The PRESIDENT: In connection with this item, a note by the Secretary-General has been circulated in document A/46/107 and Corr.1.

I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): I hope fellow representatives will excuse this last-minute intervention, but we would like to suggest that, in order to give regional groups a little more time to discuss this issue among themselves, perhaps further consideration of the issue could be postponed for two or three weeks.

The PRESIDENT: There is a suggestion from the representative of the United States to postpone the consideration of this item until a time to be agreed upon later. Does any member wish to comment?

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): I think that the request made at this point in time has come somewhat late since these elections were expected to take place 10 days ago. The different geographical groups have spent a lot of time in arriving at agreed lists of candidates from each group. In the Asian Group there is a clean slate, and the same is also true with regard to the Eastern European Group of countries. Therefore, I do not see a justification. I would like to hear what the justifications are for postponing these elections for yet another three weeks, and this at a time when we deem it appropriate to follow the timetable of the work of the General Assembly so as to conclude at the appropriate time the consideration of the agenda items of the forty-sixth session.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): I would like to try to respond, if I can, to the question of the representative of Jordan. It is simply the view of my delegation that a little more thought needs to be given to this issue than we and others have been able to give, despite the delay we have had until now. Thus, we made an informal suggestion at this point to put it off for another couple of weeks so that we may consider the matter more thoroughly and in more detail.

I would hope that other members of the General Assembly would be able to oblige us. At this stage, however, I would still like to leave my proposal simply as a suggestion without necessarily moving under a rule for any particular action by the Assembly at this time. I wonder if we could ask our friends from Jordan if they would be so kind as to allow another two or three weeks for us to consider the matter in a little more detail.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): I believe that we can reach a compromise on the question of postponement. A postponement for two or three weeks seems too long, for it would lead us to mid-December, when we will be very near the end of this session. Perhaps the question could be postponed for a week or 10 days at the most.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): I think the suggestion of the representative of Jordan is eminently reasonable. If we could agree to postpone the item for 10 days, I should be completely satisfied.

The PRESIDENT: Does any other member wish to comment? Since that is not the case, I suggest that we postpone consideration of the item until a date before the end of November, because I must confess that December will be a very difficult month in which to schedule a meeting for the purpose of

(The President)

voting. Therefore, in consultation with the various groups and interested parties, we can probably reschedule consideration of the item before the end of November.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that procedure meets with the Assembly's approval.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.